

Utah State Capitol — Then and now

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More than 91 years ago, Utah's white-columned Capitol was dedicated in a ceremony open to all the people of this state. There were speeches, music and a late-night grand ball, as officials formally dedicated the building designed by architect Richard K.A. Kletting as a home for the state.

Now we do it again. The Capitol, which has been closed the past three years, torn apart and then rebuilt, will be dedicated a second time this week as the people's house of Utah. It's a brighter, cleaner building that embraces its past through restored artwork and lighting. Yet it is also prepared for the future with modern technology and a new foundation that is designed to keep the Capitol intact and strong for another century or more.

THEN & NOW

Facts

- The interior Capitol dome is 165 feet above the rotunda floor.
- There are 14 lions' heads and 10 beehives inside the chamber of the Utah House of Representatives.
- Gavin Jack sculpted the lions that originally stood at the east and west entrances of the Capitol in 1915. New lions were sculpted in 2007 by artist Nick Fairplay.
- The rotunda was left unfinished for nearly 20 years until artwork could be funded.
- The monolithic columns inside the Capitol are about 26 feet tall.
- There are 29 desks in the Senate chamber for each Utah senator.
- There are 75 desks inside the House chamber for each Utah representative.
- John C. Olmsted, son of the man who designed New York City's Central Park, designed the landscaping for the Utah Capitol.

Renovation

Lighting: Redesigned to be more energy efficient. Historic lighting fixtures kept in historic rooms in Capitol. New skylights added to east and west atriums.

Cleaning: Exterior stone cleaned and repaired. Drum of dome restored with old and new terra cotta.

Visitor Services: New visitors center on first floor of Capitol. New gift store nearby.

Rotunda: Painting of sea gulls with 5-foot wingspans enhanced and cleaned.

Governor's suite: Silk wall fabric in ceremonial office replicated to match historic design. Original wood floor cleaned and repaired. Reception and waiting areas have new rugs created to match historic designs.

Supreme Court chamber: Repainted and wood fixtures restored. Newly restored skylight.

House and Senate chambers: Paint schemes restored to original design. Senate wall aisles have been expanded. New murals added to walls.

Factoids

- 200 different colors of paint used to rec-reate historic paint schemes
- 6.5 million pounds of concrete reinforcing steel used in restoration
- About 4,771 construction workers helped with project
- Two years to plan reconstruction, more than six years of design and construction
- 5,022 pieces of new terra cotta placed in drum and dome in Capitol
- 76 miles of audio visual wire and cable installed

Architect then

Richard Karl August Kletting

Although German-born and educated primarily in Paris, Richard K.A. Kletting became known as the "Dean of Utah Architects" for his 30 years of work in the state. His portfolio included the original Saltair Resort on the southeast shore of the Great Salt Lake, the McIntyre Building on South Temple and the Utah State Capitol.

Kletting was selected in 1912 as the architect for the Capitol. His design for the building is known as a Beaux Arts classical revival, which is similar to the U.S. Capitol. Kletting worked in Utah from 1890 until 1920.

Architect now

David H. Hart

The first time he was asked to be the primary architect behind the reconstruction of the state Capitol, David Hart said no. "I frankly did not want the aggravation of the lengthy commitment to a single project," he wrote in a biographical piece.

But Hart said the challenge of preserving and restoring the historical integrity of the Capitol soon won him over. He agreed to the task and began work in 2001 after leaving his private practice.

Isolator: How it works

One of the top reasons for renovating the state Capitol was to protect the building from collapsing during an earthquake. From May 2005 until May 2007, crews installed 265 "base isolators" beneath the Capitol to allow the building to move up to 24 inches in any direction during an earthquake. The isolators act as a sort of shock absorber.

The isolators were designed to allow the Capitol to withstand a 7.3 magnitude earthquake and reduce the seismic impact on the building by 75 to 80 percent, according to Jerod Johnson of Reaveley Engineers and Associates. To install the isolators, crews had to remove the Capitol's old foundation of concrete columns. The building now sits upon the base isolators, which rest atop new concrete footings.

The isolator provides a flexible cushion between the structure and the mat footing (foundation).

The isolator's ability to move from side to side, while securing the structure to its foundation, prevents damage during an earthquake.

Dedication

Jan. 4

Formal re-dedication of Utah State Capitol, 2-3 p.m. By invitation only.

Public fireworks on south lawn, 5:15 p.m.

Public open houses

Jan. 5-Jan. 12

Daily from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Open houses to focus on different aspects of the restoration. Lectures begin at noon.

Jan. 5: Rotunda and niche sculptures

Jan. 6: Governor's suite, state reception room and territorial governor's exhibit

Jan. 7: Visitor services and fourth floor exhibits

Jan. 8: Senate chamber

Jan. 9: House chamber

Jan. 10: Supreme Court chamber

Jan. 11: Capitol art

Jan. 12: Restoration, seismic retrofit and "Capitol Discovery Day."

Capitol Discovery Day

Jan. 12

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Activities and lectures geared towards children and families.

Lectures:

10 a.m.: Team collaboration

11 a.m.: Base isolation

12 p.m.: Lions

1 p.m.: Decorative paint

2 p.m.: Research

Activities

- Build small domes with toothpicks and gumdrops, and large domes with newspaper tubes
- Color copies of the Capitol murals with crayons
- Create mosaics with paper squares on construction paper
- Create a wyvern out of clay, one of the dragon-like guardians inside the Capitol
- Construction demonstration, shake table and tours of Capitol